(c) The prices of sensitive petroleum products are fixed by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in consultation with the Government. Private oil companies are not subject to pricing restrictions by the Government and are free to take their pricing decisions on commercial considerations.

Autonomy to Navaratna Oil Companies

3055. SHRIRAMDASAGARWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

whether Government is considering to enhance autonomy of Navaratna Oil Companies in respect of execution of Mega Projects;

whether it is a fact that as per Department of Public Enterprise's guidelines Government Oil Companies are required to take permission of Government, if individual project exceeds limit of Rupees one thousand crore;

whether Government is also considering to merge various oil companies into one major player in the fields of exploration, revival and marketing respectively; and

if so, what is the reaction of Government pertaining to grant of autonomy to Navaratna Oil Companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) In line with its policy of granting greater autonomy, the Government has delegated enhanced powers to the Boards of Navaratna Oil Companies, (i) to incur capital expenditure without any monetary ceiling and (ii) to establish financial joint ventures and wholly owned subsidiaries in India or abroad subject to ceiling of 15% of the net worth of the Public Sector Enterprise (PSE) in one project, limited to Rs. 1000 crore and overall ceiling on such investment, in all projects put together, shall be 30% of the net worth of the PSE.

In line with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Synergy in Energy under the Chairmanship of Dr. V. Krishnamurthy, Kochi Refineries Limited (KRL) and IBP Company Limited have been merged with their holding companies Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) respectively.

Cultivation of bio-fuel plant

3056. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

whether the public sector oil companies propose to sign contract farming agreements with farmers for cultivation of bio-fuel producing plants in the country;

if so, the details thereof;

the details of the incentives Government proposes to extend such farmers; and

the details of the steps taken by Government to expedite implementation of such agreements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.